

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 502

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 1665

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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SUBJECT: EC MEDITERRANEAN POLICY: JORDAN AND SYRIA OPEN NEGOTIATIONS

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 1015, (B) EC BRUSSELS 620

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE EC HAS OPENED NEGOTIATIONS WITH JORDAN AND SYRIA LEADING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATION AGREEMENTS UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE EC'S "GLOBAL" MEDITERRANEAN POLICY. THE EC IS OFFERING NON-RECIPROCAL TRADE CONCESSIONS TOGETHER WITH PROVISIONS COVERING ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION SIMILAR TO THOSE CONTAINED IN THE MAGHREB ACCORDS. AS IN THE RECENT OPENING ROUND WITH EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA RESPONDED THAT THE EC'S PROPOSAL SHOULD BE IMPROVED TO INCLUDE BETTER AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS AND A FINANCIAL PROTOCOL. BOTH SIDES WILL NOW REPORT TO THEIR AUTHORITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. OPENING ROUNDS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EC AND

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JORDAN AND SYRIA TOOK PLACE IN BRUSSELS FEBRUARY 2-3 AND

4-5 RESPECTIVELY. THE EC SIDE WAS LED BY MAURICE FOLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT, WHILE JORDAN'S DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY ITS AMBASSADOR TO THE EC, NKMEDDIN DAJANI, AND THE SYRIAN'S BY AMMER JAMMAL, DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE ECONOMY AND EXTERNAL TRADE.

3. AS IN THE CASE OF THE OPENING ROUND WITH EGYPT (REFTEL A), BOTH JORDAN AND SYRIA TOOK NOTE OF THE EC'S PRESENTATION (BASICALLY THE SAME AS THE OFFER MADE TO EGYPT) AND THEN INSISTED ON THE INCLUSION OF A FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION PACKAGE ALONG THE LINES OF THAT AGREED TO IN THE RECENT MAGHREB NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, BOTH SYRIA AND JORDAN, LIKE EGYPT, ARE ASKING FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE EC'S TRADE OFFER, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS. BOTH SYRIA AND JORDAN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO INCREASED TRADE WITH THE EC, IN PARTICULAR AS BOTH COUNTRIES ARE RUNNING SUBSTANTIAL TRADE DEFICITS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

4. LIKE THE EGYPTIANS, JORDAN AND SYRIA HAVE RESERVED THE RIGHT TO MAKE A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE COMMUNITY PROPOSAL AND IT WAS AGREED THAT THE MASHRAQ COUNTRIES WILL SHORTLY REPLY TO THE COMMISSION IN WRITING CONCERNING SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE EC OFFER.

5. A COMMISSION CONTACT PARTICIPATING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS STRESSED THE POLITICAL ELEMENTS OF THESE TALKS, NOTING THAT IN ALL THREE CASES THESE MASHRAQ COUNTRIES HAVE CITED THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO THE CONCLUSION OF EXPANDED COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH THE EC, ESPECIALLY AS A MEANS OF PUTTING SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE EASTERN BLOC.

6. PROCEDURALLY FOR THE EC, THE COMMISSION WILL NOW REPORT TO THE EC COUNCIL, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE MASHRAQ DURING THE TALKS, AS WELL AS IN THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO FOLLOW. THE COUNCIL WILL THEN HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO BROADEN THE COMMUNITY OFFER TO INCLUDE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL CO-

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OPERATION AND ADDITIONAL AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS. OUR COMMISSION CONTACT THINKS THIS DEBATE WILL OCCUR DURING THE APRIL COUNCIL AND THAT THE EC WILL, IN LARGE PART AT LEAST, MEET THE MASHRAQ REQUESTS. (IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT FINANCIAL COOPERATION FOR THE MASHRAQ IS A SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR THE MEMBER STATES, IMPLYING AS IT DOES THE NEED FOR BALANCING ACTION VIS-A-VIS A FINANCIAL PROTOCOL FOR ISRAEL.) IF THE COUNCIL TAKES A

POSITIVE DECISION IN APRIL, THEN ANOTHER ROUND OF
NEGOTIATIONS COULD TAKE PLACE SHORTLY THEREAFTER.
SOURCES IN BRUSSELS EXPECT THAT THE COOPERATION
AGREEMENTS WITH EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA CAN BE CON-
CLUDED BY AUGUST. THE SITUATION WITH LEBANON REMAINS
THE SAME--NO DATES SET PENDING CLARIFICATION OF THE
DOMESTIC SITUATION. MORRIS

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